

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

(VARIOUS SYSTEMS OF CLASSIFICATION)



In this paper, I will discuss the attributes of God and properly classify them. When I speak of the attributes of God, I am referring to those qualities of God that constitute who he is, the very characteristics of his nature. I will not referring to his acts, such as creating, guiding, and preserving nor to his corresponding roles of Creator, Guide, and Preserver. There are four classifications of these attributes I will discuss in this paper. They are listed as follow: The communicable and incommunicable attributes; the immanent or intransitive and the eminent or transitive qualities; the relative and absolute attributes; and the natural and moral attributes.

Communicable and Incommunicable Attributes

The communicable attributes are those qualities of God for which at least a partial counterpart can be found in his human creations. An example of this is love, which, while infinite in God, is found at least in partial form in humans. God deposited within mankind the ability to love yet man's love can never be as great as the one who put within him the ability to love. Another example is omnipotence, for even humans have at least a degree of power yet only God has all power. (Matt. 28:18)

The incommunicable attributes, on the other hand, are those unique qualities for which no counterpart can be found in humans. Example of this is God's omnipresence. God is everywhere simultaneously. Even with our vast technological advancements into outer space, mankind still cannot and will not ever be everywhere simultaneously.

Immanent and Eminent Qualities

The immanent/intransitive qualities remain within God's very own nature. An example of this is spirituality. In other words, these qualities do not merely describe Him for he can never be separated from them. They are in essence – HIM.

The eminent/transitive qualities go out from and operate outside of the nature of God. These qualities affect his creation such as mercy, grace and judgement, which of course requires an object.

Absolute and Relative Attributes

God's absolute qualities are those he has within him, and has always possessed independent of the objects of his creation. His relative attributes, on the other hand, are those manifested through his relationship to other subjects and inanimate objects. Infinity is an absolute attribute; eternity and omnipresence are relative representing the relationship of his unlimited nature to the finite objects of creation. The relative attributes are the absolute attributes applied to situations involving creative objects.

Moral and Natural Attributes

The Moral attributes of God are those, which in human context would relate to the concept of rightness (as opposed to wrongness). Holiness, love, mercy, and faithfulness are examples. God's natural attributes are the non-moral superlatives of God, such as his knowledge and power. Some object to this classification on the basis that the moral attributes are just as natural as the natural attributes, being an integral part of the nature of God.

Some of His Natural Attributes

- • *Spirituality*
God is a spirit. He is not composed of matter and does not possess a physical nature. Therefore He does not have the limitations involved with a physical body. (John 4:24; John 1:18; I Tim. 1:17; 6:15-16)
- • *Personality*
God is personal. He is an individual being, with self-consciousness and will, capable of feeling, choosing, and having a reciprocal relationship with other personal and social beings. He is not an abstract, unknowable being or a nameless force (higher power). (Ex. 3:14; Gen. 4:26; 12:8; 20:7)
- • *Life*
In other words, He is. He is a living God. God's life is however different from every other living being. While all other beings have their life in God, he does not derive his life from any external source. John 5:26 says that he has life in himself. Although this is true, please note that he is not separated from that which he has created. All that he creates needs his sustaining power to continue to exist – Acts 17:28. (Heb. 11:6; Jer. 10:10; Gen. 1:1)
- • *Infinity*
This means that not only is God unlimited, but that he is unlimitable. He is unlimited by space yet there is no space where he cannot be found. He is also infinite in relationship to time, which does not apply to him. He was before time began. Before the beginning began, he had already begun. The question how old is God? Is simply inappropriate. He is no older now than 10,000 years ago, for infinity plus 10,000 is no more than infinity. He is simply the one who always was. He was, he is, and he always will be. He is a timeless God. God is infinite in

every aspect e.g., Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding. (Ps. 90:2; Acts 17:24-25; Jer. 23:23; Psa. 139:7-12; Rev. 1:8; 22:13; Ps 104:24)

Below are a list of some of His Moral Attributes:

- • Moral Purity

- ~ Holiness
 - ~ Righteousness
 - ~ Justice

- • Integrity

- ~ Genuineness
 - ~ Veracity
 - ~ Faithfulness

- • Love

- ~ Benevolence
 - ~ Grace
 - ~ Mercy
 - ~ Persistence

Conclusion

In summation, I'd like to stress that although this has been one of my shorter papers, I believe that it is one of the most profound. Whenever speaking of God and his attributes one cannot help but become overwhelmed by His Excellency! This God, our God, the only wise true and living God has given us a peak into HIM. Because he has chosen to reveal portions of himself to us, we are not like others who worship their strange, unknowable and created gods. In Duet 29:29, the word of God declares, *"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."* When I think of him; of who he is; of his divine nature; of his infinitiveness; of his love poured out for that which he has created I am left perplexed and bewildered. Yes, I am left only with one question in mind, "Who wouldn't serve a God Like This?"

Min Rickey E. Macklin

www.rickeymacklin.com